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Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources
June, 1959

The attached paper was prepared in 1956 by Jameson Bond.
Some of the material in it is not now entirely appropriate, but the
information on background and living conditions may be most useful
to those first entering the north.

The paper has therefore been reproduced for restricted
circulation amongst members of the Department of Northern Affairs.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO LIFE IN THE FAR NORTH

June, 1959

by Jameson Bond

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PREFACE

For centuries the word 'Arctic' has conjured up in people's minds a picture of cold, desolate wastes and howling blizzards, of long days and longer nights, of fur-clad Eskimos and hardy ice-bound explorers. This picture was, and still is, true. But it only tells part of the story.

During recent years, the rapid and fundamental changes which have been taking place in Arctic Life more and more have become a matter of common knowledge to Canadians everywhere.

Gone are the sailing ships of the explorers and gone too are the Stone Age Eskimos whom they first encountered. Today the technical achievements of modern civilization are making possible another kind of life in the Arctic.

Each year an increasing number of "outsiders" are moving into the far north to take up residence there for the first time. But some aspects of Arctic living are still much different from the urban way of life to which many of us are accustomed. For this reason, we, in the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, felt that it might prove helpful to "new northerners" to have some knowledge of these differences beforehand.

This booklet has been prepared to meet the need for a brief general outline of information on the character of the far north and on the kind of life now led by the people who live there. The booklet also describes the present program of development being carried out by the Government among the far north's first settlers - the Canadian Eskimo.

Minister of Northern Affairs
and National Resources.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FAR NORTH

1 - THE LAST FRONTIER

A nation, it has been said, is great as long as it has a frontier.

Canada has always had its frontier. Three centuries ago, for the colonists on the St. Lawrence, the frontier lay perilously close, for the frontier was a dangerous boundary separating them from the unknown and hostile. The life of these communities was still uncertain and tenuous when traders and explorers pushed back the boundary, and probed the wilderness beyond for the wealth it might bring the present and future generations.

Even when Canada the nation, was born, the frontier was near, and the national motto "From sea unto sea" was bound at first to be more of a hope than a reality. Eventually the second sea was reached, and Canada had attained almost the limit of its two dimensions.

In yet another era of nation-building, Canada is now facing a new frontier in the north. Now we are reaching for a third sea, the Arctic, and seeking to give to Canadian life its third dimension.

Perhaps we have been slow in pushing our frontier to the Arctic, but this is no reflection on Canada. We have had other preoccupations. The wonder in the mid-twentieth century, is not that we are just starting to move north, but that we -- so very few, so very young -- are ready to do so.

What is this north of which we speak? The commonest definition is that part of Canada lying beyond the sixtieth parallel of latitude. With a few exceptions on one side of the

line and the other, this is the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. This is more than a third of our country, certainly the least-known third, in some respects perhaps the most important third. It's a million and a half square miles. It's big enough to contain more than half the United States. One island within it, Ellesmere, is more than twice the size of England and Scotland combined, though it is shared by less than 50 people.

When we look to the north we must accustom ourselves to an entirely new perspective. Although men have been exploring the Arctic for more than three centuries, it is just eight years ago that an R.C.A.F. pilot discovered three islands, one of which is twice the size of Prince Edward Island.

The distances are enormous and we can get some idea of them by projecting a few straight lines on the map. For instance, most of us are accustomed to thinking of Canada as roughly rectangular. This misconception arises from a practice of book publishers; in order to fit our country onto the printed page, they have had the unfortunate habit of lopping large areas off the top of the map. Canada is almost as long as it's broad.

The Tree Line

You cannot think of the north as just one country. There are many norths - bushlands, mountains, barren rock, frozen seas, and swimming resorts. The north is divided into Arctic and sub-Arctic, but you may be surprised to know that the line dividing it is not the Arctic Circle. The Circle means very little, except that at every point on it there is one day a year that the sun does not set, and one day when it does not rise. A good deal more important than the Arctic Circle is the tree line. It runs diagonally across the country from

near the mouth of the Mackenzie River at the Arctic Ocean to roughly the point where Manitoba's northern boundary meets Hudson Bay. Besides making the edge of the bush lands and providing a boundary for the true Arctic; this line gives some sort of clue to the vagaries of northern climate. Generally trees will not grow where the mean temperature of the warmest months of the year is below 50 degrees Fahrenheit. The treeline is also, therefore, a temperature line.

mate This strange and fascinating land is oddly enough, the largest desert in the world, if we think of the word desert in its proper sense of only slight precipitation. Very little rain falls, and very little snow, yet there are more lakes in the Canadian North than in all the rest of the world put together. They are pools, some tiny, some huge, left by glaciers and trapped in the depressions of rock which the glaciers have carved.

 The most enthusiastic Arctic hands would not claim that any of Canada north of 60 degrees has California climate. There are, however, a lot of surprises for those who have never lived there. At Fort Smith, the center of administration in the Northwest Territories, higher temperatures have been recorded than have ever been known in Windsor, Canada's most southerly city. July temperatures in Fort Smith are in fact not very different on the average from Ottawa's. The winter temperatures in this community are lower than in the south, but not noticeably lower than on the Prairies. In contrast, the mean temperature for July at Arctic Bay, on north Baffin Island is about 40 degrees Fahrenheit, 8 degrees above freezing.

It is a lonely land -- the whole of the Arctic north of the treeline, an area of nearly a million square miles, has a population scarcely greater than Brockville. A large signboard at Resolute Bay aptly describes the Arctic by stating that in all directions from Resolute there is "nothing but miles and miles of nothing, but miles and miles".

Settlement Patterns

The north is not merely a land of igloos. In towns like Fort Smith the people live in houses not very different in appearance from the newer suburbs of Toronto or Ottawa. Oil furnaces keep them comfortably warm and conveniences such as electric stoves and refrigerators are commonplace. Some northern residents who do not appear to know when they are well off, have even imported television.

This gentle living, of course, contrasts with the commonly held picture of the Arctic as a frozen waste. That picture is quite valid, but it extends over less than half the north. Alert, a weather station almost at the tip of Ellesmere Island, makes a unique claim to fame as being the most northerly post office in the world. It is hundreds of miles north of the nearest Eskimo settlement, and here less than ten men live in reasonable comfort to report the weather coming from the Polar seas for the benefit of meteorologists around the world.

Other Arctic settlements are more cosmopolitan. There are the neat, gleaming-white posts of the R.C.M.P. their flags flying in lonely symbolism of the rule of Canadian law. There are the trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, always with the sign in large black and white letters, "Hudson's Bay Company, Established May 2, 1670". Then there is the cross-topped chapel of the missionary, Anglican or Roman Catholic.

More and more now there are other buildings, the school, the teacherage, the nursing station, the home of the Northern Service Officer, even the resident scientist.

There is a danger of getting a misleading picture of the High Arctic by looking merely at the photographs of settlements, for these are few and very far between. There are endless, silent Arctic seas, in winter solid white; in summer, the pattern of the lily pond. For the most part, however, the activities of men are lost in this vastness. Almost everywhere across the barrens stretches an infinity of space in which no trace of humans can be seen. The north has a beauty all its own, an unbelievably subtle undulation of form and colour. The High Arctic in summer or winter in a world unto itself - an environment which can produce in man a strong emotional impression which may either elate or depress; attract or repel. But the impression is inescapable.

ural
ources

Until recently, the mineral resources of the north have lain dormant - a great untapped source of national wealth.

All that has stood between us and this wealth has been time and distance. In Canada's youth, there were a succession of challenges - settlement, expansion to the west, wars and depressions. Only now has the time come when we are ready to tackle what one must acknowledge as a tremendous task of development. The great distances in the north make virtually every activity there more difficult than in the south. Even though the aeroplane has made every part of the north physically accessible, so far only a comparatively small part of it is economically accessible. The industries of the north will be developed by private enterprise, the role of the government being to assist in such facilities as transportation.

The wealth of the north, however, is so great that it has tempted private capital at a rapidly increasing rate from the easy places of the south to the frontiers of the north where the job is bigger and the stakes immensely higher.

We have scarcely scratched the surface of the mineral wealth of the Arctic, yet in the seven years between 1946 and 1953 mineral production increased 1000 per cent. Some of the richest gold ore in Canada is being mined at Yellowknife. Port Radium has become a principal supplier of uranium and one of the largest deposits of zinc on the continent has been found at Pine Point. Oil, iron, silver, copper and a half dozen other minerals are now in production or are known to occur in important quantities.

The possibilities of agriculture are limited but there are probably over a million acres of arable land. Fishing is a well developed industry and good commercial timber stands await only increased market demand for their products and the transportation facilities to get them there.

Administration

Because of various historical and economic factors, the political development of the north has of necessity been slow. But in recent years this process has accelerated considerably.

Under the present Northwest Territories Act the administration of government lies with the Commissioner acting under instructions from time to time given by the Governor in Council or the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources. There is no Territorial Civil Service, and officials of federal departments - principally the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources - act in the capacity of territorial officials.

A council of the Northwest Territories, together with the Commissioner, has legislative powers comparable to those of a provincial legislature. Since 1951, the Council has been partially appointed and partially elected, and one of the members is Deputy Commissioner. Effective in July, 1954, the Council consists of nine members, five of whom are senior Federal officials appointed by the Governor-in-Council and four of whom are residents of the Territories elected for three years to represent the four electoral districts in the Mackenzie District. The Council must hold at least two meetings each year, one of which must be in the Territories. All other meetings must be held at the seat of government in Ottawa.

In 1947, the Mackenzie District west of the 109th meridian was attached to the federal constituency of Yukon, thus for the first time giving the people of the most populated part of the Territories representation in the House of Commons. In 1952, the Redistribution Act provided for a member to represent Mackenzie District.

With the expansion of the white population of the Territories during the past decade and a half, important developments have taken place in local government. Because it was clear that various areas in the Territories could not fit into the actual classification of rural and urban municipality, a flexible concept known as a municipal district, was evolved. Yellowknife, in 1939, was the first district created and the second was Hay River, in 1949. It is the usual practice when a district is first created to arrange that a majority of the Council members be

appointed by the Commissioner and a minority elected by the residents. This is still the situation in Hay River, but Yellowknife in 1947 achieved the position where the elected members were in a majority of five to four, but with the chairman still being appointed; however, in 1949 the membership was reduced to eight, five elected and three appointed, and the Council was empowered to elect its chairman from among its members. In 1954, the Council became fully elective, and now consists of a Mayor and eight Councillors.

II - THE STORY OF THE NORTH: The Period of Search

Almost overnight we Canadians have become keenly aware of the third of our country called the Arctic. Nowadays the north is a subject very much in the public eye. Because this vast region has such an interesting story to tell, we might do well to trace briefly its prehistory before, and its history since the white men first visited those inhospitable shores four centuries ago.

The First Settlers

Archaeological evidence points to successive waves of migration of aboriginal peoples from Asia to North America, during prehistoric times. One of the main migration routes lay across Bering Strait and from this direction probably came the ancestors of the Canadian Eskimos. The oldest remains of human habitation in the Canadian Arctic are estimated to date from about 1000 A.D.

The aboriginal culture of the Eskimos stands as a remarkable human achievement. Within the limited resources of a New Stone Age culture, these people evolved a mode of life which made possible their survival through many centuries of isolation entirely cut off from the main stream of human civilization. Bone, stone, ivory and sinew - these were the basic raw materials

from which they made their tools and weapons. The dome of the snow house or 'iglu' was, and still is, a highly skilled feat of engineering. For most Eskimos, the common hair seal or 'netsik' formed the basis of diet. This was supplemented chiefly by the meat of other marine mammals as well as caribou and fish. From the seal the Eskimos obtained food, fuel and clothing.

Anthropologists have demonstrated how this never ending struggle for existence against powerful natural forces helped to produce in the Eskimos those characteristics which make up their basic personality pattern as a people. The uncertainty and harshness of their physical environment also defined in large measure, the nature and function of their religious practices and social life. In sum total, the culture represented a highly developed and balanced although precarious ecological relationship with the climate, the land, the sea and with the animals upon which they depended for life.

Riches
Cathay

It is fairly certain that Lief Erikson travelling from Greenland to America in 1000 A.D. touched the southeast coast of Baffin Island and thus had the honour of being the first European discoverer. A gap of centuries followed before further explorers entered the region.

The search for a western route to the wealth of China was the driving force that sent explorers out from the sea-faring countries of western Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. In 1576 Martin Frobisher and his crew crossed the north Atlantic to discover the bay in south Baffin Island which now bears his name. This marked the first historic contact that our forebearers had with the Eskimos.

The Franklin Search

By early in the 19th century the lure of a trade route to the Orient had been gradually replaced by the desire for geographical knowledge for its own sake -- to find out if a north-west passage actually existed. At the end of the Napoleonic wars, the British navy, manned by experienced sailors was well equipped to continue the search for a northern sea route across the top of America. The succeeding decades record an impressive array of famous names including Ross, Parry, Back, Franklin, McClintock, and M'Clure. Sir John Franklin's tragic expedition of 1845 brought important results because of the geographical discoveries made by the numerous parties which searched the Canadian Arctic for the unlucky explorer. A Northwest Passage was finally found when Captain Robert M'Clure succeeded in travelling partly by sea and partly on foot from the Bering Straits to the Atlantic Ocean.

The Search for the North Pole

The geographical information which resulted from the Franklin search expeditions brought the realization that there was no practical navigation route through the Arctic islands. Fresh incentive to the penetration of the eastern Arctic came from other sources -- the competition to reach the North Pole, the whaling industry, and finally the interest of the Canadian government in establishing sovereignty over the Arctic lands she had inherited from Britain. In the field of exploration, one main area remained to be discovered. This was the vast archipelago which lay north of Lancaster Sound and which is now known as the Queen Elizabeth Islands. British, Americans and Norwegians as well as other nationalities, all made significant contributions to the discovery of this part of the Arctic in the latter part of the 19th century.

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Although the spirit of pure exploration extended our knowledge of the far north, it was commerce and government which helped fill in many of the blanks further south. In the early part of the 19th century, the whaling industry had shifted from the Greenland sea to Baffin Bay. Whale hunting in this period was a highly profitable business and the whalers came mainly from two areas: the ports of Scotland and from the New England States. The Scottish whalers centered most of their activity in Baffin Bay while the Americans, using smaller vessels, hunted the waters of Hudson Bay.

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reignty

In 1880, the young nation of Canada woke to the fact that her northern boundaries were vaguely defined. Accordingly, at her request, the British Government confirmed the transfer to the Dominion of all the Arctic Islands adjacent to the Canadian mainland. The view of international law is that title to lands cannot rest solely on discovery, but must be followed by some kind of occupation. Canadian expeditions which asserted and maintained this sovereignty were soon sent out by the Canadian Government.

In 1906 Amundsen became the first man in history to travel by ship from the Atlantic to the Pacific through the Northwest Passage. However, it was not until World War II that the gallant RCMP Schooner 'St. Roch' commanded by Staff-Sergeant (now Superintendent) H.A. Larsen conquered the Northwest Passage from both east to west and west to east. These epic journeys also marked the first circumnavigation of the North American continent by way of the Panama Canal.

Following World War I activities in the Arctic entered what may be termed the modern period. Pure exploration has yielded place to scientific research. During this period, the Hudson's Bay Company which had been operating ships through Hudson Strait for over 200 years, finally opened its first trading post in 1909 at Wolstenholme on Hudson Strait and in the years that followed opened up a series of posts scattered across the Arctic. During this same period the missionaries began their work of conversion among the Eskimos and the resulting change has had far reaching effects on the Eskimo way of life. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police established Arctic detachments which not only brought governmental supervision and protection to the Eskimos but also symbolized Canadian sovereignty over her far northern regions.

The Canadian government increasingly recognized its responsibilities in the Arctic and in 1933 the Hudson's Bay Company ice breaker 'Nascopie' was chosen to transport the annual Eastern Arctic Patrol, which in more recent times has been carried out by the Department of Transport vessel the "C.D. Howe". The stage of exploration had now changed to one of occupation.

III - LIFE IN THE NORTH: The Period of Occupation

The trader, the missionary and the policeman -- these symbolize a period of development in the Canadian Arctic which, by and large, continues to the present day. They have all made their contribution, and each has had his particular effect on the way of life of the Eskimos.

der Without design or intention the trader has brought far-reaching changes to the old Eskimo way of life. But this is not unusual. It has happened in many parts of the world and is to be found wherever the culture of one human group has been affected by another.

The coming of the trader resulted in a shift from a purely hunting economy to one which combined hunting and trapping. The Arctic fox which heretofore had been an animal of little value to the Eskimos, suddenly became one which was highly prized. Its pelt was something which the white man wanted and for which he was willing to give in exchange weapons and tools, food and clothing. No longer did the Eskimos hunt animals only for clothing and food, but they devoted increasing time and energy to catching the now valuable tiriginiak -- the fox.

Before the white man came, the Eskimos believed that the amount of game which a hunter secured depended upon the kind of relations he maintained with the spirits who controlled the supply of animals. Equipped with harpoons or with bows and arrows they could usually obtain enough food to sustain life, but with primitive weapons they did not appreciably affect wildlife resources as a whole. Although the introduction of the rifle made it much easier for a hunter to provide meat for his family, it also put modern weapons into the hands of men who were accustomed to killing as many animals as they could.

In olden days, the Eskimos had two kinds of boat -- the hunter's 'kayak' and the woman's boat or 'umiak' in which the Eskimo family used to transport their worldly goods during the summer season. With the advent of the whaler and later the trader, came whaleboats. More recently, these boats have become

powered with gasoline engines and now several hunters in one boat can range over a wide area in a comparatively short time in search of game. Within the space of a few decades, the wasteful hunting practices which have resulted from the untrained use of this new equipment have brought about a serious depletion in the game resources of the Arctic. Whenever a hunter in his kayak harpooned a seal, he was almost certain of taking home his quarry. But a man in a whale boat who is equipped with a high-powered rifle is able to fire away at his target from quite a distance. There is a good chance of the seal sinking before he can get close enough to haul it aboard.

The declining supply of game has produced another effect. In particular, the reduction of the caribou herds has meant that fewer and fewer Eskimos are now able to get skins for clothing and for bedding. Here again the trader is playing an increasingly important role. In exchange for more fox skins the Eskimos are able to obtain from him the warm woollen clothes and blankets so necessary for life in the north.

Only a generation or so ago, the Eskimo obtained his fire by using a bow drill and heated his dwelling by means of a seal oil lamp. Today, a change is taking place and in many parts of the north the Eskimo wife cooks her food over a kerosene-burning primus stove which she lights with a storebought match. In some areas because of the growing scarcity of game, the Eskimos have had to increasingly depend on the white man's flour as the mainstay of diet.

The Missionary

In indigenous times the Eskimos possessed a complex system of religious belief which permeated every aspect of life with detailed effect and meaning. Their world of thought was

peopled by humans and by the spirits with which men were in close and frequent contact. Behaviour was determined, in part by the natural environment and in part by the directives received from supernatural sources.

For the aboriginal Eskimo a state of well-being and happiness depended upon the kind of relationship which the individual and the community maintained with a whole hierarchy of spirits. One of the interesting characteristics of indigenous belief was the nature of this relationship between men and spirits. Absent was the idea of submission and humility. Men approached deities in equalitarian terms - something like the way we in our society, would reach an agreement through collective bargaining.

Although their religious system was logical, it was not rational. The logic rested in part on two concepts, one of which was expressed in the institution of the 'angokok'. After extended training this person became a sort of combined priest, prophet and physician. In his person lay the welfare of the community. He it was who paid visits to the realms of the deities and there sought information as to the cause of misfortune or trouble in the community. He it was who dictated the ritually prescribed behaviour, the form of propitiation by which the proper relationship was restored with the angry spirits. He it was who healed the sick and who foretold as yet unseen events.

Another part of the rational lay in the concept of the guardian spirit. By this belief, each individual could gain the protection of a spirit which would enable him, if it was powerful enough, to ward off many of the dangers and vicissitudes of life. Such were the essentials of their system of belief.

Viewed in terms of social control, this ideology worked well in aboriginal times although the 'angakok' could use his power for personal advantage and often did. Two powerful social sanctions - ridicule and ostracism - served to reinforce the traditional beliefs so that in a conceptual sense at least, the Eskimos were locked for centuries in an ideational "deep freeze".

Some elements of the aboriginal belief pattern still remain. Sorcery and dream interpretation continue to be commonplace in some parts of the Arctic. But today, due to the efforts of the missionary, the institution of the 'angakok' has largely fallen into disrepute and disuse. Gone too for the most part, is the practice of magic and the attendant use of amulets.

The establishment of the churches in the north brought with it the full weight of the ideational heritage of Western man.

Seen in historical perspective, whenever the impact of this heritage has been impressed upon a primitive culture, sooner or later the result is the same. One system of belief replaces the other. We may reasonably expect that within a generation, aboriginal belief and practice as anthropologists found it less than a century ago, will have become a thing of the past, a rich part of Canadian folklore.

The policeman brought to the Eskimos not only the protection of Canadian law, but also a judicial system which was quite alien to Eskimo thought. The whole process of change which resulted from the introduction of these new legal concepts has, by and large, been characterized by patience and moderation on the part of the police, and by recognition and acceptance on the part of the Eskimos.

Within a relatively short span of time, the judicial and administrative system of our own society has been superimposed upon the native pattern of control. The different concept of what constitutes a crime, the varying forms of punishment for criminal behaviour, the idea of law enforcement officers, the institution of a jail; in brief, the whole unaccustomed complex of a formal judicial system stands in striking contrast to the informal system of unwritten yet nonetheless effective aboriginal law.

Similarly, the introduction of monogamy, the discouragement of the practice of adoption, the registration of births and deaths, the disbursement of various forms of social assistance such as family allowance, the introduction and enforcement of hunting seasons have all contributed to weaving a new pattern of controls into the life of the Eskimos.

IV - ESKIMOS AS A PEOPLE: The Period of Transition

By all accounts Canada's 9000 Eskimos are a remarkable people. They have come by this reputation honestly, having earned it through many centuries of successful adaptation to an extremely rigorous environment. Let's have a look at these people so that we can gain some idea of the way they live, of the way they think, and of the way they behave. To have some understanding of this subject is not only helpful in getting to know the Eskimos as neighbours, but adds greatly to the interest of one's life in the north.

It's difficult to generalize about Eskimos throughout the Arctic as a whole because there are significant regional differences between groups. This is determined by the degree to which our way of life has affected theirs. Generally speaking,

the Eskimos have been most influenced by our civilization in the regions of the Mackenzie delta and to a lesser extent in the Hudson Bay area and on Baffin Island. The least degree of change probably occurs with some exception in what is called the Central Arctic, which is the area lying between the Mackenzie River on the west, and Melville Peninsula on the east. If you are like most other Canadians you may never have heard of this big peninsula jutting up into the Arctic Islands, but you may find it interesting to become familiar with some of the more commonplace names in the north, and Melville Peninsula is one of these.

Conception of Time

Since the Eskimos live a different kind of life than we do, it's not surprising that they look at many things from another point of view. One of the differences in outlook which need to be understood is the concept of time. Whether we recognize it or not, we are really prisoners of the time clock. To the Eskimos who live off the land this must seem like a strange practice indeed - fully grown people always obeying the hands of a little ticking thing on the wall. When you get away from the white man's settlement and visit the Eskimos in their camps, you may find a clock in every tent, but it will likely be hours out. However, the Eskimos who work for wages soon recognize the need to pattern their daily living by the moving hands on the clock with the same unquestioning acceptance as ourselves.

A majority of the Eskimos still live by hunting and trapping and they continue to face the day to day question of where the next meal is coming from. When life is of necessity focused on such a fundamental question, and when procuring game is at times so precarious and patience-testing, people are not likely to be too fussy about what they eat, and their outlook on

life becomes very limited indeed. Except when chasing game there is seldom any need to be in a hurry, and besides, there is always tomorrow. Time is properly measured by changes in season and by the annual cycle of animal life. For example, one season comes in the late spring when the seals are able to come up through the breathing holes and sun themselves on top of the ice. During this period hunting becomes relatively easy. Another season begins during the warm weather when the sea ice moves out and once again the Eskimos can see open water. This means travel by boat instead of by dog team.

In contrast to our conception of time which we measure by the work week and by hours of recreation, the Eskimos seldom pay attention to the hour of day or night. During the summer season the children of the community may sometimes be found playing at three o'clock in the morning and sleeping all that afternoon. This really isn't unusual because there is light twenty-four hours a day. In the winter time, with its correspondingly few hours of daylight, the hunter may have to rise at a very early hour so as to arrive at the floe edge in time to hunt seals.

The Eskimo's different view of time is expressed in another way. You may find that your northern neighbour will up and do something without apparent forethought. For example he has probably given some thought beforehand to a hunting trip but he is likely to decide to go on the spur of the moment, and the next moment his dogs are harnessed and he's off.

In part this is due to the pattern of hunting where one must be ready to move at once whenever game appears. It is also in part, due to the fact that the Eskimo is responsible to no one

except himself in the ordinary course of life. He has no specific duties to attend to, no schedule to meet. And so life moves on in its timeless, leisurely fashion. Out in the isolated camps the rhythm of existence still pulses with the same basic beat - the search for food, the search for food, the search for food.

The 'Husky'

If there is one thing more symbolic of Arctic life than any other, it is the Eskimo dog -- the husky. This remarkable animal, a mongrel of the first class, is the evolved product of many centuries, and is their equivalent of our work horse. The dog not only provides transportation for people, but also hauls their food and worldly possessions. The husky is capable of enduring great hardship, of going for several days, or even longer, without food. This faithful animal will usually pull the sled as long as he has the strength to do so. A hunter's prestige is in part, measured by the number of his dogs, by their appearance and by his control over them.

Although the Eskimos respect the complex technology of the white man, his various inventions and equipment, they still consider themselves, and properly so, the real people of the north -- the 'Innuits'. They know that they are able to wrest a living from their environment, whereas white men usually live off large quantities of imported food. There have been a few white men who have gone into the north and lived with Eskimos and become as adept as the 'Innuits' themselves in hunting and in living off the country. For these white men the Eskimos have unbounded respect.

Contrast of Arctic with City Life

Another element of northern life which shapes the way in which the Eskimos think is the fact of isolation. The north is literally a frozen desert with one of the lowest densities of population found anywhere in the world. For this reason, meeting

other people is an event of some importance. Ordinarily, an Eskimo lives with his immediate kin in a group of perhaps 20 or 25 people and he may be a day or two distant by dogteam from his nearest neighbour. Despite limited means of communication, the people usually know such things as who is moving about on trips and where the hunting is good. News travels over the northern grapevine with remarkable speed and sometimes with accuracy.

In contrast, the crowded life of the city is full of impersonal relationships. In the course of a day, a person may actually see hundreds, if not thousands, of other faces. This is something quite unknown, indeed almost inconceivable, in the experience of an Eskimo who has not been "outside". When Eskimos congregate at the white man's settlement at Christmas time, or in the spring for trading and visiting, a hundred people would be as big a crowd to them as a stadium full of people would be to us.

By this scale of measurement it is easy to see that in Eskimo society the dignity of man and the worth of the individual are very meaningful phrases. Each individual is known as a distinct personality and his little oddities are recognized and usually accepted.

As in any other human group, the Eskimos have their share of what may be termed personality problems. But usually the individuals who live in a camp get along well together not only because they are members of the same family group but because they must co-operate in order to survive.

Outside the family group another factor operates which is a carry over from earlier times. This factor is sorcery. Sorcery may be defined as the belief in the ability of one person to harm another person by supernatural means. You simply don't

anger any other person for fear of retribution through sorcery. In some parts of the north today, this is still an important element in determining Eskimo behaviour. Despite amiable outward appearances, it is quite possible that strong feelings of animosity may exist within the community but they aren't expressed openly to people outside the family group. By way of contrast, in city life there are quite a number of people to whom we can let off emotional steam without fear of retribution. Although feelings of arsenic expressed with a smiling face are not uncommon in the urban setting.

Because of the isolation and the comparatively few events and individuals involved, every little incident is worth reporting and becomes a subject of considerable talk. When Eskimos meet after not having seen each other for some time, there is plenty to discuss but none of it is concerned with world affairs. This is quite understandable when one bears in mind both the social and the physical environment in which the people live. But the north is fast changing and with it the interests and horizons of thought among the Eskimos are expanding in some areas quite rapidly.

Family Life

Despite differences in outlook, the Eskimos are people much like ourselves with the same desires for security and happiness. The family is the focal point about which the life of the individual revolves. In city life we have so many outside attractions in the form of recreation and entertainment, that the family does not have the same intensity of meaning for us that it has for a group which depends almost entirely upon its own internal resources.

Perhaps no area of relationships is more revealing of the character of a human group than the relationship between

parents and children. Among the Eskimos there is a truly remarkable form of child training. From its first breath the new born infant is surrounded by love. It would be a rare thing to find serious rivalry on the part of the older children towards the attention which is showered without stint on the family's youngest member. Indeed, it is not at all uncommon to see an elder brother or sister treating the youngest child with the same affection as that which the parents show towards it. Soon after weaning, the child takes on its share of responsibilities as a contributing member of the family. The children are expected, according to age and sex, to perform particular chores and duties in the daily life of the camp. At an early age, the young boy is usually given a toy whip, and later a puppy or two, and perhaps a miniature sled. As soon as he can walk the Eskimo boy begins the long, rigorous and specialized training which goes into making a self-reliant and capable hunter.

The children are rarely, if ever, given corporal punishment. Yet, they are obedient to their parents. There is no "teenage problem" among the Eskimos for by the time an individual is well into his adolescence, he usually has married and has assumed the full responsibilities of adult life. Child training is one of the aspects of life about which we can learn a good deal from the Eskimos.

Because we are brought up in the midst of it, we can easily forget that social control in southern Canada is subject to a highly complex and well developed system of formal law. Parliament enacts laws, the courts interpret them, and the police enforce them. As Canadians we can exercise a great deal of freedom of choice in our personal affairs, yet in many of the things that matter most, what we do or do not do is determined

by the legal system under which our society operates. Although theoretically this also applies to the Eskimos, in actual practice they still live in many respects by their own form of social control and have their own informal way of getting along together. This rarely takes the form of any force or open violence and calls for a great deal of self-control. This is another respect in which many of us can learn from our Arctic neighbours. To find out what the Eskimos as a group think about something, call them together and turn the question over to them. They have an effective, informal way, of getting the views of the various members of the group and of expressing these as a simple opinion.

Because of the factor of isolation it is not surprising that Eskimos should view a newcomer with a question mark. Until they have had time enough to assess that person - and this is done with a very shrewd and realistic eye - one can hardly expect to be accepted in the community in more than a superficial way. Keen observers that they are, the Eskimos soon appraise the character and personality of a new arrival and often give a nickname to the newcomer which aptly describes his outstanding characteristic.

Language

Language presents a basic problem to communication between the Eskimos and ourselves. This is undergoing considerable change in some communities as a result of government schools and increased contact with whites generally. The Eskimo language is a remarkably self-consistent one. It has a complex but ordered grammar and is made up of a system of root words to which are added particles which modify the meaning of the root. For this reason the language is both highly expressive and very flexible. There are considerable

differences in dialect from one region to another but for a number of years the Baffin Island dialect has been used as a sort of written 'lingua franca' in the Arctic. Although the language is a difficult one to learn to speak fluently, without too much effort you can learn enough words and phrases to be able to communicate on ordinary, everyday subjects. You will find that most Eskimos will appreciate it if you speak in their own tongue even if it is only a few halting phrases. Trying to speak the language also gives your neighbour a chance to teach you something and this is a good thing because it helps to develop a sense of reciprocation between you and them. At present they are in the paradoxical position of being masters of their own environment, yet face to face with a human group possessing an overwhelming technological superiority.

Ordinarily the Eskimos are friendly and cooperative people. However, in their desire to be agreeable and to understand you, they may sometimes say that they have grasped something when they haven't. Also you may find it a bit confusing if you ask someone a negative question, such as "Didn't you come to work today?" and he will reply "Yes" but he means "No". The Eskimo is simply agreeing with statement whereas we are confirming the negative.

bits

The admirable qualities of the Eskimos are widely known - the open friendliness, the ready smile, the agreeable disposition, the never-failing ingenuity, the broad adaptability, the unhurried patience, the quiet resourcefulness. But to know this is not enough. They also have a number of habits which we might find difficult to understand and one of them is cleanliness.

Habits are partly determined by the mode of life of a people. By our standards, the living conditions of most of the Eskimos are quite primitive. They usually live in tents during the summer and snow houses or wooden shacks in the winter time. Since the Eskimos live north of the treeline, they have always been faced with the problem of a limited supply of fuel. Without hot water and soap it is difficult to keep clean in a cold climate. If a strong smell assails your nostrils when you enter an Eskimo tent, it is most likely because the people keep unrefrigerated meat around. It isn't the people that smell but the meat they eat and the sealskin boots they wear. In this respect, the first year is the worst year. It has been said that when you no longer notice the pungent smell of seal meat, you have become a real northerner.

However, nowadays, the idea of personal cleanliness is gaining increasing acceptance. This change is due in part to the continuing efforts of government doctors and nurses and to other interested people who live in the north.

For Eskimos engaged in wage employment, better housing and adequate heating facilities are rapidly becoming available. The Eskimos who have already moved into better living quarters have proven themselves just as able to maintain a satisfactory standard of hygiene and sanitation as any other people.

V. - ESKIMOS AND GOVERNMENT: The Period of Development

Thirty years ago, the explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson with prophetic pen wrote a book about the Arctic entitled "Northward Course of Empire". In almost a literal sense, his predicted trend for development is becoming true in this generation.

Of recent years, methods of modern communication by aircraft and radio, have brought a new dimension to northern life. No longer are people totally isolated from the "outside" for months at a time. The nurse, the welfare teacher, the weather observer, and the Northern Service Officer -- these reflect increased governmental interest in our own vast back yard. Defence construction and private mining enterprise have brought a new era of growth to the Arctic. The stage of occupation has now become one of development.

These changing times have had a great influence upon the life of the Eskimos and have presented the government with a set of responsibilities which has been conveniently labelled the 'Eskimo Problem'. The 'Eskimo problem' is not one and single but rather consists of a series of problems, ~~related in~~ that they all deal with Eskimos but different in that each community is at a different stage of growth and calls for a particular treatment. However two aspects of the 'Eskimo Problem' are common to all parts of the North. One is the problem of numbers; the other is the problem of contact with a new way of life.

Problem
Numbers

The problem of numbers is simple; the population is getting larger and the food resources are getting smaller. The population is growing largely because of the health and welfare measures which we, the rest of Canada, have undertaken on behalf of the Eskimos. Starvation is no longer tolerated. It is met by relief to the needy, or, when necessary, by air drops of food to people in isolated places. Our campaign against disease is raising life expectancy. But the game resources of the country, far from keeping pace with the increased population, have

gradually been depleted. Within the past five years the population of caribou, on which so many of the Eskimos depend for food and clothing, has dropped by half.

The Problem of Contact

The other aspect of the problem is the steady advance of our civilization and our activities into the Arctic. Unless the Eskimos are to be isolated from such activities - unless they are to be denied the right to seek jobs in new communities, to buy our convenient tools and implements, to get our foods - unless they are kept completely away from these things, their way of life must change. It has changed, and it will change more. Nothing can prevent it. All we can do is try to help the Eskimo to make the change successfully.

To gain a living in these circumstances the Eskimos must have new means of employment. Some will continue in hunting and trapping. Because a smaller proportion of the population will be thus engaged, the returns should be higher. Other Eskimos will find new occupations in small industries in their own environment. Still others will find their economic future in the kind of enterprise we have brought to the north, such as weather stations, military installations, or even mining. In short, for the Eskimos of the second half of the twentieth century, just as for other peoples of Canada, there will be a diversity of opportunity such as did not exist in earlier days.

In order to take advantage of this diversity of opportunity three goals must be reached - the creation of new economic outlets, improved education, and better health. All three go hand in hand. They are inseparable.

health

One of the unfortunate results of our extended contact with the Eskimos has been the introduction of tuberculosis among a people with a low resistance to it. At great cost the Department of National Health and Welfare has recently made a vigorous attack aimed at the control and later eradication of the disease among our northern neighbours. Already there is considerable medical evidence to indicate that the anti-tuberculosis campaign is "over the hump".

Improved health standards are perhaps the most immediate task because good health lies at the foundation not only of a more secure way of life in general, but also of a programme for fuller education and new economic enterprise. Although tuberculosis has been the worst scourge, in isolated Eskimo communities other diseases such as measles, which we consider relatively minor, create serious and unpredictable problems.

education

During this transitional period one of the most important services which the government can provide for the Eskimos is adequate educational facilities.

But education produces dilemmas. Many of the Eskimos, both children and adults, are anxious for more education, for they realize that it opens the door to a fuller life. But nowhere is it more difficult to provide teaching than in a country where there is one person for every one hundred square miles. Most Eskimos live in groups of two or three families. If they lived in larger communities they could not survive by hunting and trapping as most of them now do. For such scattered groups, local schools obviously cannot be provided. The children, therefore, must come to central places in the Arctic where they can live in hostels and attend schools. This plan in itself presents

a danger, for the Eskimo child, if taken away from his parents too long, can lose the skills of living on the country. That is not serious if we are sure that there will be a job in a new way of life to turn to. If there are not such jobs - or not enough of them - the results can be harmful.

We are placing increased emphasis at all stages of Eskimo education on vocational training, and this is something which will become steadily more important if Eskimo children are to be prepared for new types of employment.

Education appears to be the main key not only to useful employment but also to the eventual integration of the Eskimo people within the life of the nation as a whole.

Of the various aspects of Eskimo culture which have received wide recognition, perhaps their unique stone carvings have won the highest praise. These carvings range from purely representational to what we might call a little condescendingly, sophisticated. All the good carvings show an astonishing grasp of form and of motion. It will not surprise you to know that Eskimo sculpture has enjoyed a great success in North America and Europe and has been widely acclaimed by the most exacting critics.

Other industries now being studied by the Department of Northern Affairs include the collection of eiderdown, weaving, sheep raising, tanning and the preparation of specialty foods.

Much more important in the long run than these opportunities for self-employment, however, are the openings created by new activities in administration, defence and industry in the north. The Eskimos are being given new employment opportunities and, whenever possible, they are at the same

Home
Industry

Technical
Employment
Opportunities

the great college training for some better work. Some have also been sent to the South for short courses of vocational training. An increasing number of technical and scientific jobs are opening up in the north and this creates a potential market for the services of trained Indians. During educational vacations will offer to them new opportunities as radio operators, weather observers, administrators. The Indians have proved their value as workers. They are industrious, quick to learn, and the turnover among them is relatively low.

In co-operation with employers, one of the responsibilities of the Northern Service Office is to assist the Indians in finding suitable, permanent wage employment. Employers recognize that it is not going to be easy for white business to attract themselves to new and strange types of work. But already there is considerable evidence to show that the young people coming out of their schools can do just as effectively a job as other Americans. It is the one growing number of young Indians that we hope the new program will do that a new place in our economy and in our society. The government intends to take the greatest care to place these younger men where the work is most varied and full of life and challenge, and to provide as much as possible the kind of work and experience which will be profitable while they are learning.

But we must not forget, as the new program is being developed, that it is of the utmost importance to encourage the Indians to continue their education. The government is going to do everything in its power to help them. We must not let the young men who have been trained in the government schools and who are now in the service of the government, let them go back to the old life of poverty and ill health. We must encourage them to continue their education and to take advantage of the opportunities which are now being made available to them.

or most of their cash income, and on game and fish for much of their subsistence. This way of life will probably continue for the most part unchanged for some years to come.

No introduction to the present day life of the Canadian Eskimo would be complete without making mention of the recent extensive changes which have resulted from defence construction in the far north. During 1956, nearly 200 Eskimos found employment on the Distant Early Warning Line. Overnight, the familiar sights and sounds of the Arctic have been pushed into the background by the roar of aircraft and of bulldozers. Installations have appeared suddenly, as if from nowhere, springing up on the face of the land. Whatever else this sudden rush of activity may mean to the Eskimos, it has brought with it highly paid wage employment for a number of men where yesterday they were hunters and trappers moving within the timeless, daily round which characterizes life in the north for so many of its inhabitants.

Community
Development

The first settlers of this country include another and much larger ethnic group - the Canadian Indians. Experience has proven that wherever Indian Band Councils operate, the chiefs and councillors have shown a high sense of responsibility to the Indians who elected them to look after their affairs. Year by year these Band Council are taking on new and greater responsibilities. There is good reason to believe, that given the opportunity to do so, the Eskimos will prove themselves just as capable of working out the direction and tempo of their own development. The Department of Northern Affairs plans to encourage the growth of similar community councils among the Eskimo people.

In their sharply changing life, the Eskimos clearly need guidance and assistance. This is the special job of the Northern Service Officers. They are trying to help the Eskimo in his search for new opportunities, trying to help him in his adjustment to the new way of life. But far from shouldering the Eskimo's problems, a main task of the Northern Service Officer is to develop local responsibility, to encourage the Eskimos to make their own decisions, to run their own affairs.

imos as
izens

As members of a democratic society the Eskimos hold the same status under the law as other Canadian citizens. They have the same duties and responsibilities, the same rights and privileges. But it takes time for this legal position to find concrete expression in practice. The north is still at an early stage in its constitutional development. The history of our political growth as a nation is an evolutionary one. This same pattern of development is being followed in the north. As population centres grow, more and more autonomy is being achieved in local affairs.

If our northern neighbours are to have their rightful place in Canadian life, they must be encouraged to accept just as much responsibility as they seem able to bear. The more responsibility they can accept for their own affairs, both individually and as communities, the happier they will be and the greater will be their contribution to our common Canadian life. As we continue to encourage them to accept added responsibility, every year more of our Eskimos will become fully integrated into Canadian life, and eventually there will be no such thing as an administrator of Eskimo affairs in Canada.

On Being an
Eskimo-
Canadian

Nowadays we hear a good deal about the need for an "integration" of native peoples with our way of life. It is important to understand what we mean by this term. Integration does not necessarily mean "assimilation" or "absorption". Nor does it mean that the Eskimos need lose their identity as a people. It necessarily does mean the complete disappearance in time of many of the primitive elements of their culture. Given the choice few Eskimos would prefer to cook with a stone lamp rather than with a modern oil stove, or to hunt with bow and arrow rather than with a rifle. Integration must not mean the loss of that character and temperament which have made it possible for the Eskimos to adapt so successfully to life in the Arctic through centuries of existence.

English-speaking Canadians, French-speaking Canadians, Canadians of every origin all retain pride in the achievements of their forebearers. So must it be with the Eskimos. They are a proud people and rightly so. They must be encouraged to take pride in their own heritage but to be prouder still of being Canadian. This is quite different from the present view held both by the Eskimos and by ourselves, namely that we are one people and they are another.

Eskimos are not ethnological curiosities. Basically, they are human beings just like us. They can gain a sense of belonging to the Canadian way of life in direct proportion to the extent we accept them as equals and welcome them into our society. Already there is evidence to suggest that the first generation of formally educated Eskimos will be people who can fully participate in and contribute to, the growing achievement of the Canadian way of life.

Among the Canadian people generally, there is getting to be a growing recognition of the fact that the Eskimos of Canada can have a bigger and more important part to play in the management of their own affairs and ultimately in the life of the country as a whole. We may look forward to the day, perhaps not too far distant, when an Eskimo will sit in the House of Commons as a member of Parliament representing an Arctic constituency. The Canadian government invites every citizen, especially those who live in the Arctic, to assist the resident officers of the government who are charged with the responsibility of assisting the Eskimos in their development, in helping to speed the day when this objective will become a reality.

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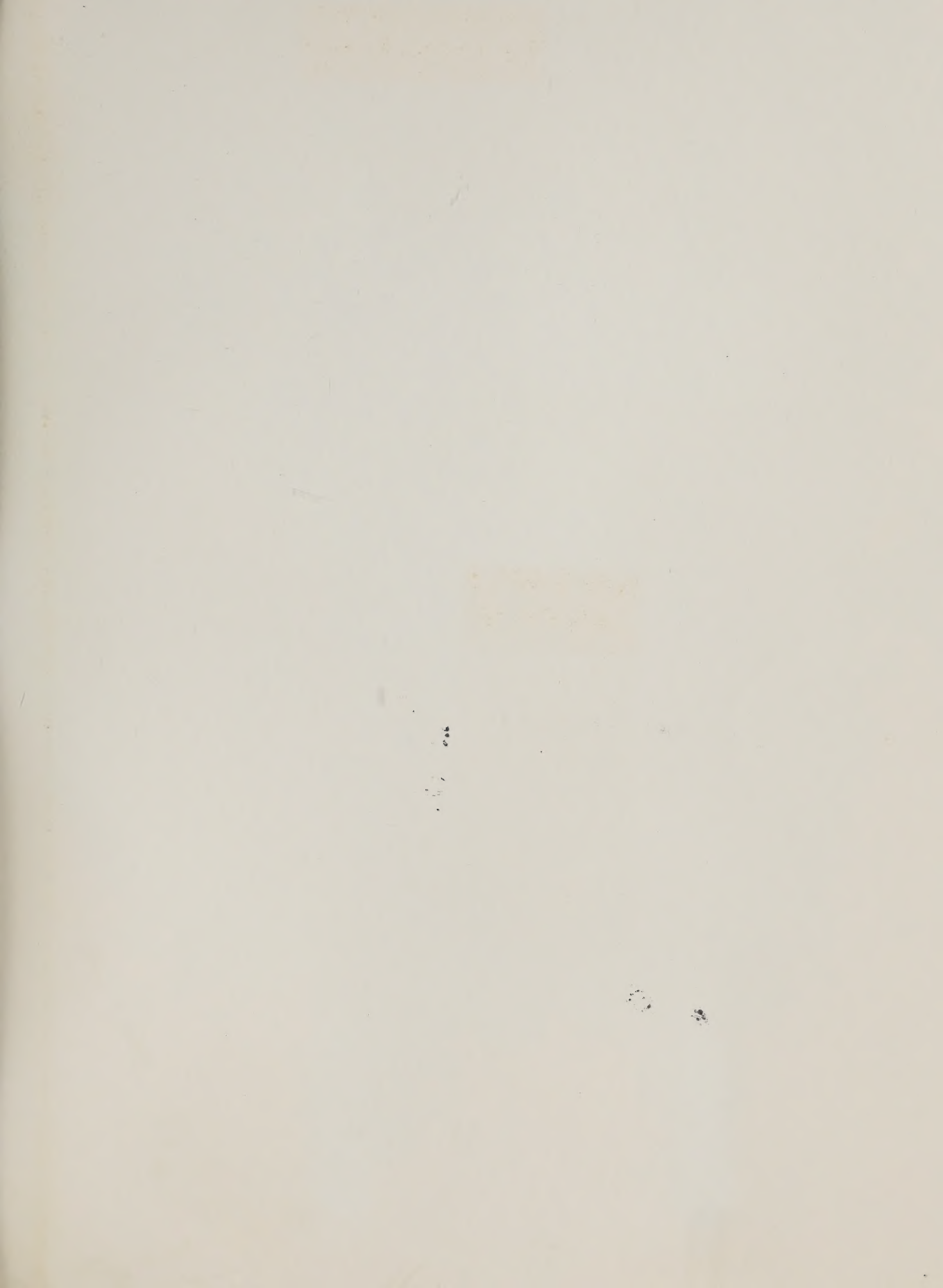
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